



(U) Letter From Ottawa

FROM: [REDACTED]
Deputy SUSLO Ottawa
Run Date: 01/22/2004

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Dear editor,

(U) I promised you a series of letters on the life of an NSAer assigned to CSE in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Well, I have to tell you, life in Ottawa is far too full to be taking time to write letters. Instead of regular installments, how about one short note just to give you a sense of things here?

(U) We are skating on the Rideau Canal, the world's longest ice skating rink, now. Yes, it's blustery cold, but it doesn't seem so bad when you can stop along the way to enjoy warm beaver tails and hot chocolate. Even with the cold, I'd rather be skating than joining the runners and bikers along Colonel By Drive or Queen Elizabeth Drive either side of the canal. Yes, even in the snow! Next week, we may cross-country ski between our home downtown and the office at CSE along the paths of the Rideau River. All of this will put us in perfect shape and in the right frame of mind to have a ball at Winterlude in February. Maybe there'll be time to watch a Senators ice hockey game or participate in the locals' curling tournament, as well.

(U) Of course, we are eagerly anticipating spring and the tulips the melting snow and sun will bring. Ottawa will come alive with color. Once the warmer weather arrives, the hot air balloons will be back floating through the skies of Ottawa each dusk and dawn, taking off from Quebec across the Ottawa River and landing just a few hundred yards from CSE. Soon after the balloons come back, it will be time for the Ottawa Jazz Fest. We'll try to attend a few concerts in between Ottawa Lynx games. Well, they are the Baltimore Orioles Triple A farm team after all, and they made it all the way to the playoffs last year.



Byward Market

(U) Summer will be time for meandering through the Byward Market downtown taking in the smells and sights of all the wonderful fresh locally grown produce, shopping for gifts for home, or enjoying the vast selection of restaurants, cafes, and bars in this most eclectic part of town. From the market, we'll head over to one of the half dozen museums or the National Arts Center, or maybe to Majors Park to lay back and listen to a jazz, blues, or classical concert in view of Parliament. We'll also find an excuse to throw the bikes on the car and head for the hills: the Gatineau Hills, in a beautiful park at the edge of the Canadian Shield, just 10 minutes from downtown Ottawa across the river. It will be a different world there with only French being spoken.



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(U) SID Around the World '04

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(U) We'll return to the park in the Fall to watch the leaves turn a myriad of colors and maybe again later in the year for a bit of downhill or cross-country skiing. I love the drive back to the city almost as much as being away, especially at the holidays when downtown Ottawa is a blaze of shimmering lights and color.

(U) I suppose you want to know what else there is to know about Ottawa. Let me summarize by saying that it is a family-oriented "small town" with all the amenities of a large capital city. The schools are excellent, the commute is short (from everywhere), the parking ample, the air dean, the shopping and dining terrific, the cultural opportunities endless, and the work environment invigorating and challenging. And New York is just an hour away if you really feel the need to "go home." What more can I say. Come visit. You'll love it here. We do!

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